

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

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Introduction

All praise is for Allah, the forgiver of sin, the acceptor of repentance, the severe in punishment, the bestower (of favors). None has the right to be worshipped but He, and to Him is the final return.

Praise be to Allah, when He intends a thing, He only says, "Be!" and it is. By His mercy, He saved Moosa ؑ (Moses) and his nation against Pharaoh. Praise be to Allah, Who responded to the call of Prophet Nuh ؑ (Noah). Moreover, by His mercy He relieved the distress of Prophet Yunus ؑ (Jonah) when he supplicated to Him. Glory be to Him, who removed the calamity of Prophet Ayub ؑ (Job) and brought Prophet Yusuf (AS) (Joseph) back to his father after a long period of time.

I bear witness that there is no other god worthy of worship except Him, and that He has no partner. I bear witness that Muhammad is His Slave and Messenger. O Allah, send Your peace and blessings upon him according to the number of those who remember Allah and the rotation of day and night.

To proceed:

This is a compilation of the memoirs and feelings of repentant people and those who have fallen into sin. These are confessions of the elderly who spent their youth

in frivolity, young men whose lusts overwhelmed them and young women who committed sins. These are their memories of past and almost forgotten events, but have been recorded in the hope that they will benefit others.

These people have returned to Allah and are waiting for His reward. They were once beset by temptations and lusts in various forms. Many had fallen into this quagmire and committed sins when their faith was weak and they had been overcome by Satan's whispers. These are people who believe in Allah's saying:

﴿ نَبِّئْ عِبَادِيَ أَنِّي أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴾

"Declare (O Muhammad) unto My slaves, that truly, I am the Oft-Forgiving, the Most-Merciful." [Al-Hajar, 15: 49]

Moreover, he believes in the saying of the Almighty (which means):

﴿ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ ﴾

"And that My Torment is indeed the most painful torment." [Al-Hajar, 15: 50]

These are the tales of people whose repentance has pleased Allah. He does not need them, they need Him. Allah said to them in the *Qudsi Hadeeth* (sacred narration):

*"O My slaves, you commit sins by night and by day, but I forgive all sins. So ask Me for forgiveness and I will forgive you."*¹

Their Prophet ﷺ told them: "Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, stretches out His Hand during the night,"² so that they may repent for the faults committed from dawn to dusk.

¹ Sahih Muslim, Hadeeth 2577

² Sahih Muslim, Hadeeth 2759

A Companion Seeks Forgiveness

The first of these accounts is that of the old and blind Companion Ka'b ibn Maalik ؓ who spoke about the mistakes of his youth, in particular his failure to join the Battle of Tabuk (630 CE/8 AH). It was the last battle campaign led by the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ allowed people to leave and prepare for the battle, while he collected the funds needed to prepare the army; eventually gathering together thirty thousand warriors. This was a time when people showed their true mettle.

They were preparing to battle in extreme heat and to travel a great distance to face a huge army. There were a large number of Muslims whose names were not registered in any records. It is reported in the two authentic collections of Al-Bukhari and Muslim that Ka'b ؓ was young, strong and wealthy and had a mount and weapons. "I can get ready in the blink of an eye," he said to himself. So he went on about his usual business. He kept procrastinating until

he saw that people were preparing in earnest to leave with the Prophet ﷺ.

"I can still organize everything tomorrow or after tomorrow," he said to himself. However, many days went by and he still did nothing, until one day he found that the army had left. He thought about hurrying to prepare his provisions and get his mount, but he hesitated because they had already travelled quite a distance ahead. When he finally got ready and decided to leave, he realized that there was no way he could reach them in time, and so he stayed in Madinah. He recalled: "I would walk in the streets of Madinah after the Prophet ﷺ left, and only see the hypocrites or disabled men who were excused from engaging in battle."

Allah's Messenger ﷺ, meanwhile, arrived in Tabuk with the Muslim army of thirty thousand soldiers. But when he looked around at the faces of his Companions, who had sworn allegiance at the treaty of Al-'Aqabah, he found that one of them was missing.

He asked: "What has Ka'b ibn Maalik done?"

A man replied: "O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, he was left behind because of pride and arrogance."

Mu'adh ibn Jabal ؓ said: "You are lying! O Messenger of Allah ﷺ, we only know him as a pious man." The Prophet ﷺ did not say anything.

Ka'b ؓ said: "When the Prophet ﷺ came back to Madinah from the Tabuk campaign, I kept thinking how I could avoid his anger so I sought the help of some wise

people. Once he reached Madinah, I knew that the only thing that would save me was to tell the truth."

When the Prophet ﷺ arrived in Madinah, he went straight to the mosque, prayed two *rak'ahs* and sat down to listen to the people. More than eighty men came to apologize for not participating in the campaign, giving various excuses. The Prophet ﷺ accepted their excuses, asked forgiveness for them, and left their inner intentions to Allah.

Ka'b ؓ later went to the Prophet ﷺ. "When I came to him and greeted him, he smiled an angry smile, and said, 'Come!' I sat before him and he asked, 'What kept you back?' I said, 'By Allah, if I were talking to anyone other than you I would be saved from his wrath by giving an excuse and I am an eloquent convincing man. If I were to tell you something (a falsehood) that would placate you, I know that Allah would make you angry with me instead, and I hope that by telling you the truth, Allah will forgive me. By Allah, I have no excuse! And by Allah I was never stronger or wealthier than when I stayed back.' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'This man has told the truth.' Then, turning to me, he said, 'Get up and await Allah's decree.'"

Ka'b ؓ left the mosque overwhelmed with misery; not knowing what Allah would do with him. When his people saw the state he was in, they followed and reproached him, saying: "We swear that we never saw you commit a mistake before. Were you not able to make excuses like those who stayed behind? Why don't you offer an excuse that will make the Prophet ﷺ pleased with you? Then, he will ask Allah to forgive you and you might be forgiven."

Ka'b ؓ said: "They kept persuading me to the (point where) I was about to go back and lie. I asked: 'Is anyone

Repent with Good Deeds

Allah is not only pleased with those who repent and forgives them; He even replaces sins with good deeds.

Allah says,

﴿وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا ۖ يُضَاعَفْ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَخْلُدُ فِيهِ مُهَانًا ۖ إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ۖ﴾ وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّهُ يَتُوبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَتَابًا ﴿٦٨﴾

"And those who invoke not any other ilah (god) along with Allah, nor kill such life as Allah has forbidden, except for just cause, nor commit illegal sexual intercourse and whoever does this shall receive the punishment. The torment will be doubled to him on the Day of Resurrection, and he will abide therein in disgrace. Except those who repent and believe (in Islamic Monotheism),

and do righteous deeds, for those, Allah will change their sins into good deeds, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. And whosoever repents and does righteous good deeds, then verily, he repents towards Allah with true repentance."¹

Al-Bukhari reports that Hakeem Ibn Hizaam ؓ went to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and said:

"Before embracing Islam I used to do good deeds like giving in charity, manumitting slaves, and keeping good relations with kith and kin. Shall I be rewarded for those deeds? The Prophet ﷺ replied, 'You became Muslim with all those good deeds (without losing their reward).'"²

Allahu Akbar! Sins are forgiven and bad deeds are replaced with good ones. The good deeds of people before they embrace Islam are also recorded. What a great religion!

Allah is the Oft-Returning, the Most Merciful but His forgiveness is for those who turn to Him. It is for the people who, when they commit a sin, ask for His forgiveness. And if they are reminded about Him, they remember Him. The greatest problem is not the sin itself, but that the person becomes accustomed to committing sins and does not seek repentance. Allah is Most Merciful towards His worshippers. His mercy is quicker than His wrath and His forgiveness is faster than His punishment. Allah is more merciful to His worshippers than their own parents.

1 Al-Furqan 25: 68-71

2 Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadeeth 1436

there came to you My Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) and you denied them, and were proud and were among the disbelievers. And on the Day of Resurrection you will see those who lied against Allah (i.e. attributed to Him sons, partners, etc.) their faces will be black. Is there not in Hell an abode for the arrogant ones? And Allah will deliver those who are the Muttaqun (pious) to their places of success (Paradise). Evil shall touch them not, nor shall they grieve."¹

It is authentically reported through At-Tirmidhi that the Prophet ﷺ said,

"Allah the Almighty said: 'O son of Adam, so long as you call upon Me and ask of Me, I shall forgive you for what you have done, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you. O son of Adam, were you to come to Me with sins nearly as great as the earth and were you then to face Me, ascribing no partner to Me, I would bring you forgiveness nearly as great as it.'"²

Surely, Allah would forgive him even if his sins were as great as the earth. A sign of Allah's Mercy is that He watches His slave disobeying Him but He does not hasten to punish him. Rather, He inflicts him with diseases, calamities, and disasters so that he returns to Him, to (plead) for such things to be removed. The more fear the slave has, the more mercy he can attain. Allah would then relieve the slave's calamities. At-Tirmidhi reported that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"Remember Allah in adversity and He will remember you in prosperity."³

1 Az-Zumar 39: 53-61

2 At-Tirmidhi, *Hadeeth* 3540

3 Musnad Ahmad 1/307 and Al-Mustadrak lil Hakim 3/623, 624

'I'm Born Again'

I cannot forget a young man I knew while I was at university. He was one of the best people I had ever met. He was very young and radiated good health. Once we graduated, we lost contact with each other.

One day he called me and asked me to visit him. He said: "I cannot visit you and don't ask me why. Once you visit you'll know the reason," he said sadly, and gave me directions to his house.

When I arrived there and knocked on the door, his young brother opened up and took me to him. I found him lying on crisp white sheets with crutches beside him. I also saw some medication and a device attached to his leg to help him walk.

He looked exhausted as he lay on the bed. He tried to get up to greet me but could not do so. I sat near his head, concealing my tears and said to him: "Forgive me, I did not know about your illness. Didn't you graduate from the university? Didn't you tell me that you were going to buy a house and get married?"

He said: "Yes, but something happened that I didn't

Gratitude for Good Health

Those sinners who repent are the most loved by Allah. However, He hates those who transgress and oppress others. It is quite strange that many disobedient people spend their days and nights in a happy state. (They are unaware that) Allah and His angels curse them, the pious invoke Allah against them, and Hellfire longs for them. Allah gives the sinful person hearing, sight, reasoning and intellect; and in turn, the person commits sins and follows in the footsteps of Satan. What would you do if you were paralyzed, very ill, or lost your hearing and sight?

One day I visited a patient in the hospital. I was told that he was nearly forty years old. He seemed healthy and cheerful. However, when I went up close to him, I was shocked to see that he was paralyzed and could only move his head and part of his neck. I had entered his room while his phone was ringing and so he called out: "O *Shaykh*, please get the phone for me." I got him the phone and brought it close to his ear. I waited until he finished his

conversation. He then asked me to place the phone back in its place. Then I asked him: "How long have you been in this condition?" He said: "I have been a captive in my bed for twenty years."

A colleague once told me that one day when he was visiting a hospital, he heard a man screaming in a heartrending way from one of the rooms. My colleague said, "I entered his room and discovered that he was completely paralysed. He tried to move his body but he could not do so."

"I asked the nurse: 'Why is he screaming?'"

"He said: 'This person is completely paralyzed, so his intestines have been affected as well. He therefore suffers from severe indigestion and constipation after each meal.'"

"I suggested to him: 'Don't give him heavy meals, take meat and rice away from him.'"

"The nurse said: 'Do you know what kind of food we give him? By Allah, we only feed him milk through tubes attached to his nose.'"

"I thought to myself: 'All this pain just to digest milk!'"

Another person told me that he once passed by a patient who was completely paralysed; he could not move any part of his body. "I went into his room and found a wooden stand holding a copy of the Noble Qur'an. Whenever he finished reading two pages, he kept repeating the same pages because he could not turn the pages. He could not

Life after Repentance

The life after repentance is the life for which you were created by Allah. How can you enjoy this life while thinking you are Allah's enemy because you are committing sins? How can you commit sins while Allah, your Lord, feeds you, heals you, brings you to life, and ends your life? Allah has knowledge of all things and no organ of your body can move without His permission. Whoever repents sincerely will be one of the soldiers of this religion. He will enjoin good and forbid evil and Islam will be his main concern.

The Prophet's Companions once stretched out their hands to pledge allegiance to the Prophet ﷺ. When they had done this, they felt as if they were soldiers of Islam. Ibn Ishaq reports (the origin of the story is in the authentic collection of Al-Bukhari) that when the Prophet ﷺ settled in Madina, he started sending his Companions to neighboring areas to call people to Islam. He sent one of his Companions to the valley of Nu'man, close to Taif. When the Companion

arrived, he found some Bedouins who knew nothing except knowledge of their camels and sheep.

He called on them to accept Islam but they refused. One of the Bedouins went to Madina to obtain information about the Prophet ﷺ. The man rode his camel until he arrived in Madina. He started calling out to the people saying: "Where is the son of 'Abdul Muttalib? Where is the son of 'Abdul Muttalib?" A man guided him to the mosque. While Allah's Messenger ﷺ was sitting with some of his Companions, the Bedouin, with his hair in two plaits, dismounted and tied his camel to the mosque.

He called out: "Which one of you is the son of 'Abdul Muttalib?"

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "I am the son of 'Abdul Muttalib."

The man said: "Muhammad?"

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "Yes."

The Bedouin said: "O son of 'Abdul Muttalib, I want to ask you a few questions so do not be bothered."

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "Go ahead."

The Bedouin said: "Who raised the



that you will not return to sins again. Fourth, is to render rights back to people and to ask the forgiveness of those whom you have wronged. Fifth, is to repent before it cannot be accepted; namely, before the final agony as it cannot be accepted at this time and we should always fear the plotting of Allah. Also, repentance cannot be accepted when the sun rises from the west.

The last issue

One of the most important factors to remain on the state of repentance is to leave the place where sins are committed. Rather, it would be much better to leave the people who invite you to commit sins.

In the two authentic collections of Al-Bukhari and Muslim there is the story of the man who killed ninety-nine innocent people. He was remorseful but doubted whether Allah would accept his repentance because he had made children orphans, wives widows, and destroyed homes.

He went to a learned man and told him about his past, explaining that he wished to repent and become a better person. For all his learning, the scholar was a man who had not been able to absorb the wisdom he had learned. "You will not be pardoned," he said. "Then I may as well kill you too," said the other. And so he killed him.

He then found another worthy individual and told him that he had killed a hundred people. This was a wise man who said, "Of course you will be pardoned; repent at once. I have just one piece of advice for you: avoid the company of wicked people and mix with good people, for bad company leads one to sin."

The man expressed repentance and regret, weeping as he sincerely implored his Lord to pardon him. Then, turning his back on bad company, he set off to find a neighborhood where righteous people lived.

On the way, his appointed hour arrived, and he died. The angels of punishment and of mercy both came to take away his soul. The angels of punishment said that as a sinful person, he rightfully belonged to them, but the angels of mercy also claimed him, saying, "He repented and had resolved to become a good man. He was on his way to a place where righteous people live, but his appointed hour had come." A great debate ensued, and Jibreel (Gabriel) was sent as an arbitrator to settle this affair.

After hearing both sides, he gave this verdict: "Measure the ground. If the spot where he died is closer to the good people, then he belongs to the angels of mercy, but if it is nearer to the wicked people, he will be given to the angels of punishment."

They measured the ground. As the man had just set out, he was still closer to the wicked, but because he was sincere in his repentance, the Lord moved the spot where he lay and brought it to just outside the city of the good people. Thus, the penitent servant was handed over to the angels of mercy.



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